

RESEARCH

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AUDIENCE

In order to create a successful and useful application, we are tailoring its features to the needs of a niche audience. This audience includes elite-level coaching professionals in college sports. According to an article by Business of Apps, the number of apps downloads jumps from 149 billion in 2016 to 197 billion in 2017. This rapid growth projects 352 billion apps will be downloaded in 2021.

As for specific app usage, the Facebook app shows the highest level of penetration among 18+ year olds. Facebook messenger and Google Search follow closely behind, according from the same article. Social Networking is the app category where users spend the most time, coming in at a whopping 29%. This statistic demonstrates that app users are interested in using a mobile platform to connect and share with friends/peers. Across all user experiences, smartphone usage is primarily a medium for communication and entertainment, allowing users relief from their daily stressors.

Coaching at the collegiate level is a career that comes with a unique set of challenges and stressors. From our understanding, most coaches do not have a reliable medium to escape the stresses of the job and connect with coaches who are also enduring the same day-to-day grind. Referencing data from a New York Times article, we have compiled a list of challenges that our potential app users face regularly:

- Time away from family
- High-visibility job
- Pressure from fan-base
- Not willing to seek help
- Overly demanding schedule
- Unexpected injuries
- Uncoachable players
- How to handle winning streaks/losing streaks (success/failure)

While usage of smartphone applications is tremendously high, there are currently over 3.8 million available in the Apple and Android app stores. In order for our app to be unique and useful to our audience, we are paying close attention to our competition.

COMPETITION/INSPIRATION

ConnectedCoaches

ConnectedCoaches is an online platform that aims to create a community for coaches on any level. Members can register for free and be involved in any sport. These coaches are mainly volunteers rather than paid professionals. Members are encouraged to make their local communities better places through physical activity. The website gives coaches a place to interact with other coaches that face the same issues, share ideas and solve problems. There is a space for blogs/discussion posts that look at 'time-saving tips' or 'drugs in the sport.' Users can search with keywords for specific articles in the forum. ConnectedCoaches promises to be a friendly environment that offers love and support. This web-only platform is a project of UK Coaching. It looks like usage was very strong in 2016 but has dwindled since. While we want to narrow our selection of coaches for our app, we are inspired by the communal and supportive nature of the site. This platform will serve as a useful model for us going forward.



CoachNote

CoachNote is an app that allows coaches to create plays for almost any sport and send them to their team. Coaches can choose a field layout, draw their play, record it, and send it out. The app, created for use on an iPad, provides a video tutorial so that users understand how to maximize available features. Reviews from users say the app is very useful for training drills, but the biggest complaint is not being able to share data with other coaches. The app costs \$4.99 and works only on iOS devices. It is ranked the no. 1 paid sports app in 36 nations. We think this play-creating function would be very useful for sharing strategy and exercises not just within a coaching staff, but among other coaches in the same sport.

American Red Cross First-Aid App



American Red Cross First-Aid App offers text instructions, videos and Q&A for safety guidelines and injury care. It is a free app that instantly provides information on how to handle the most common first-aid emergencies. The layout has 5 main pages: Learn, Prepare, Emergency, Tests and Hospital. It has a 4.4 star rating in the app store. Incorporating an emergency-preparedness feature on our app could help coaches feel more capable of handling injuries or emergencies on the job.

Reddit

Reddit is the fifth most popular site in the United States. It is essentially a large collection of forums where users can address almost any topic. It hosts over a million communities or "subreddits" where users can find information regarding a single topic. Upvoting or downvoting posts determines how many people see it. Reddit allows millions of users to interact and comment on other people's opinions/questions. The platform has a simple, no-frills design where content is at the forefront. Reddit offers a premium membership program at \$4 per month called Reddit Gold. These members have perks, like the ability to test out new features of the site that haven't been released yet. Otherwise, membership is free. We plan to incorporate a feed where users can post memos/questions/opinions and receive feedback through comments. We also are interested in creating "subreddits" that divide up content by sport.



COMPETITION/INSPIRATION

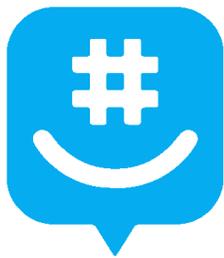
FaceBook

Facebook is an online publishing ecosystem that hosts user content at no charge. Some of its key defining features include user profiles, a newsfeed and Facebook messenger. It is no longer a website, but an app and a brand. It allows for real-time messaging, event-planning and many more features. It is a place to share photos, statuses, news and characteristics of your personality. Users can share their personal preferences on movies, music, humor or style and find others who share similar interests. More so than most other social networking tools, it is very profit-motivated. It racks in plenty of money from displaying ads, but its users have remained loyal to the platform for years. In our app, users will make profiles to establish who they are and what they are interested in. Later on, we hope to add an event-planning feature where members can meet together in person.



GroupMe

GroupMe is a free mobile and web platform that allows almost any device to participate in group messaging. In 2013, GroupMe had over 12 million registered users, with 550 million messages sent each month. It allows for quick communication in both large group settings and in one-on-one conversations. Groups are exclusive in that members to group chats must be invited by a group leader. Users have a profile photo but no other profile information. The app makes it easy to share photos, videos and links. We plan to utilize chat and group messaging features in our app, where one member can individually message another member or can create a group for multiple members to communicate.



groupme

COMPETITION/INSPIRATION

LinkedIn



LinkedIn is a social networking platform, both app and web-based, that is distinct for its emphasis on employment. Users post their professional experience, credentials, awards and current job standing in a personal profile. LinkedIn is mainly useful for job-seekers and employers to connect on a professional level and foster professional relationships. As of 2017, LinkedIn had 500 million members. The platform offers premium subscriptions in which users pay for more advanced services and more access. We plan to emulate LinkedIn's professional feel in the way we develop user profiles. We also want to establish a tiered payment system where members can join for free or subscribe to advanced features.

Sportifico

Sportifico is a free app designed for players and coaches to communicate. On the surface, it looks like exactly what we are trying to create, but it puts more focus on networking in order to develop a soccer career. Users build a sports resume, post statuses of their performance, and engage in others' posts on a newsfeed. Coaches use the app mainly for the purpose of scheduling practices and matches. We will reference this app for inspiration and view it as an immediate competitor, but we will focus more on coach relations for the purpose of mental-health.



COMPETITION/INSPIRATION

World 50

World 50 is a private, web-based community for senior-most executives in global organizations. According to their site, users put an extreme amount of trust in the platform to house their ideas and information. The site is very exclusive and keeps a low profile. Members can intimately share solutions and discoveries free from press and competition. It holds various events and summits for top executives to meet and interact with one another. We want to establish the privacy that World 50 holds as a standard. With high-profile clients, it is important to earn their trust and ensure their conversations and ideas will not leave the platform.

A large, stylized, grey number '50' logo. The '5' is a thick, rounded shape with a curved top and a small hook at the bottom. The '0' is a thick, rounded shape with a horizontal bar at the bottom. The overall style is clean and modern.

The logo for CoachBook, featuring the word 'CoachBook' in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are grey with a subtle gradient and a slight shadow effect, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

CoachBook

CoachBook is the largest online community of coaches, according to their website, that facilitates networking and research among sport professionals. It allows coaches to network, share articles, and search for coaching jobs. Members can also participate in professional development workshops. It appears this site is regularly used, but the overall look is not professional. It is unclear how many members the platform actually has. The purpose for this platform is similar to our own, but we will not model our app after this site's layout and overall design.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL NETWORK USAGE

While social networking is incredibly popular and continuing to see growth, heavy usage can have harmful effects on children and adults alike. An article from *Time Magazine* reported that the more time a young person spends on social networking apps, the more likely they are to report depression and anxiety. Social media posts are infamous for inducing anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem, especially on the platforms of Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. However, social networking usage has the potential to offer community, emotional support, and a platform for self-expression.

One of our goals for our app is to eliminate any negative effects experienced in social networking. We aim to create a space that is free from headaches, social comparisons and outside pressure. The **Calm** app, with its relaxing sounds and visuals, has been one of our inspirations in developing our product. Encouraging mindfulness and gratitude while combating stress and anxiety, this app has seen millions of dollars in success already. There is a large market for mental wellness apps that we hope to tap into. Furthermore, we want this to be a safe space for coaches rather than another burden.



Meet The Client: Tom Black



TOM BLACK

LOCATION:

Athens, GA

TITLE:

Volleyball Head Coach

FAMILY:

Married with two children

EXPERIENCE:

- 12 years of NCAA collegiate head coaching experience at UC San Diego and Loyola Marymount
- Became head coach of UGA Women's volleyball in 2017
- Involved with the U.S. Women's National Team and served as an assistant coach at the 2016 Rio Olympic games

PRIOR TO COACHING:

- Received his bachelor's degree in political science from UCSD in 1996
- Was a four-year letterwinner and set numerous hitting records and earned All-MPSF honorable mention honors in 1996
- Was Volleyball Magazine's Small College Player of the Year in 1996
- Earned Small College All-America honors in 1996

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